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SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER DETAILS OCTOBER 17 CAIRO  
VISIT OF PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT ABBAS

Classified by DCM Stuart Jones for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary. Egyptian Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit told the Ambassador October 17 that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas during his meeting with President Mubarak earlier the same day had provided a confident and upbeat assessment of events in the Palestinian territories as well as prospects for continued USG support. Nevertheless, Aboul Gheit highlighted Abbas' complaint that ammunition had yet to be delivered by Egypt to the Palestinian Authority as agreed, and requested USG help to persuade Israel to "turn words to action." Abbas was reportedly sanguine over prospects for Gazan economic development and a pending agreement on reopening the Rafah terminal. End summary.

2. (C) Aboul Gheit described Abbas, currently en route to Washington via Paris and Madrid, as upbeat and positive on the overall political situation in the Palestinian territories. Abbas conveyed to President Mubarak his "eagerness" to receive further political support from President Bush "beyond what was received in the U.S. during his last visit." It was crucial that he "build further bridges to Washington" and receive clear USG political support.

3. (C) The PA, Aboul Gheit said, was anxious to increase its ability to control the situation in the territories and needed the deal on ammunition provision by Egypt to turn "from words to action." Despite apparent agreement from all three sides (Egypt-Israel-PA), the ammunition had yet to be delivered. (Note: Aboul Gheit disavowed any role in the ammunition issue for himself, noting that it was being handled in security channels. End note.) According to Aboul Gheit, Abbas claimed that the PA was "not in a position to take hold of the situation" without the ammunition.

4. (C) On a more positive note, Aboul Gheit described Abbas's optimism on Gazan economic development. Abbas said that money was starting to flow for hospitals and other projects, including from United Arab Emirates figures who were investing in housing and other infrastructure projects. Similarly, Abbas conveyed that he expected an agreement "very soon" between Egypt, Israel, and the PA on the reopening of the Rafah border.

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